DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 768 CG 009 642

AUTHOR	Frank, Letitia
TITLE	The Student Assembly. New Directions for Students for Student Councils, Number 4.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Secondary School Principals, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	65
NOTE	55p.; For related documents, see CG 009 641-652
AVAILABLE FROM	The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036 (HC-$1.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC Not Available from EDRS..PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Assembly Programs; *Guidelines; Pamphlets; Program Evaluation; *Program Improvement; *Program Planning; Secondary Education; *Student Government

ABSTRACT

Why do secondary schools follow the practice of having student assemblies? What are these assemblies expected to accomplish? Who should be involved in planning them? What types of programs best suit educational, cultural, and informational purposes? How can systematic evaluation or appraisal of student assemblies be achieved? These and similar questions may be easier to ask than to answer. That is why the National Association of Student Councils presents this booklet as the fourth in the New Directions for Student Councils series--to provide guidelines for planning, scheduling, and producing a balanced long-range student assembly schedule. (Author)

ED1037768

The Student Assembly

By

LETITIA FRANK

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New Directions for Student Councils

NUMBER FOUR

The Student Assembly

By
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Foreword

Why do secondary schools follow the practice of having student assemblies? What are these assemblies expected to accomplish? Who should be involved in planning them? What types of programs best suit educational, cultural, and informational purposes? How can systematic evaluation or appraisal of student assemblies be achieved?

These and similar questions may be easier to ask than to answer. That is why the National Association of Student Councils presents *The Student Assembly* as the fourth in the New Directions for Student Councils series—to provide guidelines for the planning, scheduling, and producing of a balanced long-range student assembly schedule.

We wish to thank Letitia Frank, the author; Gerald M. Van Pool, Director of Student Activities of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals; and Richard P. Harland, NASSP Editorial Assistant, who edited the manuscript and saw it through to publication.

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The Student Assembly

School Assemblies —A Student Council Project

It is a tribute to the work and effectiveness of the student council that many schools have entrusted to that organization the responsibility for the planning and presenting of assemblies during the year.

It is a far cry from the early school "chapel," with its formal atmosphere and teaching purpose, to the student-centered program of today, in which the program is conceived, planned, and carried out by students.

If the student council is to fulfill its responsibility, it is important that those concerned know what they are trying to do, what they expect to accomplish, and what procedure will best attain the desired objectives.

In some schools, the question of assemblies is a source of perennial argument, with some teachers maintaining that the programs are not worth the time and effort they demand, and others asserting staunchly that they satisfy a school need and should be strengthened rather than discontinued.

The arguments against assemblies include the following: (1) They take school time which could better be used for teaching fundamentals. (2) They require endless hours of practice. (3) Teachers are harassed by the necessity for developing programs. (4) Both teachers and students are unnecessarily keyed up by the programs.

On the other hand, even those who are often most crit-

ical of the schools of today have conceded that the high school graduate of today is far more poised and better prepared to preside over a meeting and present a point of view than they themselves were at the same age. Many school officials feel that the experience of the school assembly has contributed greatly to this development. They feel that the answer to the problems is not to do away with programs, but to seek to minimize the difficulties.

At any rate, most schools have settled the matter by scheduling regular assemblies as part of the school day, some holding them as often as every day, others as seldom as once a month, but most on a weekly basis. It seems important that regular meetings be held; otherwise, the whole program may suffer from lack of interest and failure to appreciate the assembly's rightful place in the over-all school program.

OBJECTIVES

First of all, then, the student council should try to understand what a well planned and well executed program of assemblies can and should accomplish. There are certain general objectives of the school as a whole that the assembly can achieve better than any other activity. If those who plan assemblies can envision clearly the goals of a good program, they can then work toward providing those experiences that will bring about the desired results.

1. Building a Unity of Spirit

The assembly should weld the student body and the faculty into a unity which no other school activity can achieve. Consider the athletic program, the clubs, even the classes—all are divisive, separating the school into many little compartments and interest groups. The assembly, on the other hand, brings all these groups together and, through group singing, cheering, and common enjoyment of programs,

promotes a feeling of oneness. In an assembly program meeting its responsibilities, the audience is composed, not of juniors and seniors, athletes and scholars, camera fans and chorus, but of members of Blankville High School. A good assembly plan fosters school *esprit de corps*.

2. Developing Poise and Stage Presence

A second purpose of the assembly is to develop poise and stage presence in the participating students.

In many schools the student body president alternates with the vice-president in presiding over assemblies, and this provides these young people with invaluable opportunities to be educated in the techniques of presiding and the art of standing before a group poised and unafraid. Other leadership qualities develop along with these. The presiding officer learns, for instance, to express appreciation to speakers and to performing groups; and in the course of a year's service, he will learn, perhaps by bitter experience, perhaps by an adviser's helpful advice, to fill unexpected spots of time with impromptu remarks or with other material which his ingenuity suggests to him. The importance of a pleasing, well modulated voice and of speaking with authority in his tone becomes apparent. Tact is cultivated by such responsibilities as calling time on a well known speaker or bringing to order members of a debating team who have turned a debate into an argument.

However, the presiding officer is not alone in realizing these benefits; every student who serves on a panel, acts in a play, or presents a part of a devotional is developing the ability to face an audience, to speak effectively, and to acquit himself well on the platform.

3. Training for Leadership

Assembly programs train for leadership. This applies not only to those who preside, but also to the many who

plan the program, direct the staging of presentations, and do the thousand and one other things that the program demands.

Often, adults are surprised at the skill with which high school pupils organize and direct a year's activities. This skill does not come about by accident, but by careful thinking and more careful supervision by the adviser and other school personnel. Nevertheless, one can almost see the students who work with this program grow in their power to lead others.

4. Providing Inspiration

An assembly program provides a context in which the inspiration of good poetry, good music, and sentiment may be carried beyond the classroom.

Consider patriotism. The classroom exercises may teach the meaning of the flag, the proper etiquette for displaying it, the great poetry and music associated with it, but still not inspire so stirring a response in the hearts of young people as the presentation of the Colors on the school stage, the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, and the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Possibly, no history lesson on the greatness of Abraham Lincoln ever means as much to students as one assembly presentation of "Prologue to Glory."

Plays and pageants offer an excellent opportunity for teaching many desirable personal qualities. Scrooge, in Dickens' "Christmas Carol," probably can do as much to implant generosity in the hearts of school children as home, school, or church lessons on the value of charity. A pastor once said to a boy who had played Marcellus in a presentation of "The Robe," "My boy, you could not have played this part without its making a profound impression on you. Your whole life will be affected by what you have done this

morning." He was right; and he did not take into account the effect on the audience of such a play.

5. Teaching Facts

Assembly programs supplement the regular curriculum by helping to inform the student body. Many facts can be presented more vividly and with more lasting impact in an assembly program than in a regular class. Others are reinforced when, after the classroom experience, an assembly program presents the same material or related facts in a different way.

An example is the South Carolina emphasis on alcohol education. Each year the schools of the state are required to stress during the first week of February the effects of alcohol. In science classes particularly, and sometimes in English and social studies classes, statistics are presented and papers and discussions are prepared. Finally, as a clincher, the state requires an assembly, in which classroom work is strengthened by a public program.

The suggestion of informational programs often brings a groan from the students; but a little ingenuity, along with careful planning, can make these programs very interesting as well as very valuable training instruments.

6. Providing Entertainment

Consideration should be given to assemblies for pure enjoyment, such as stunt programs or faculty satire of students. Besides these, there will be others which have laughs and enjoyment mixed in with the serious content of the presentation. The science demonstration on the push of air is primarily a teaching demonstration, but students get real enjoyment from watching it. A debate seems far removed from entertainment, but often students seem to enjoy it more than a farce. If the program is well planned, students

will look forward with a great deal of pleasure to the assembly period.

7. Lifting the Cultural Level of the Student Body

Although an adviser would probably never dare use the term "cultural" in talking to students, there is no denying the fact that the assembly can and should help to raise the cultural level of the school.

The possibilities are almost limitless in the field of music. The boy who likes nothing except the nasal singing of a Western ditty to the accompaniment of a guitar may never appreciate Grand Opera, but it is surprising how far he can be brought along the road by careful planning which includes classroom music, the cooperation of teachers in the music department, and assembly opportunities. Where to start? How fast to move? Although these and other questions must be answered by *all* concerned with the problem, the student council adviser can help by suggesting assembly programs that present a variety of types of music, portray in vivid scenes the lives of some of our composers, and offer opportunities for enjoyment of many types of music.

Those whose idea of humor is only slapstick farce *can* be led, by classroom instruction, library cooperation, and assembly presentations, to enjoy comedy of a little higher type and eventually, if things work out, even to appreciate the comedy of Shakespeare.

8. Developing Listening Habits

Every person will be, after his high school days, a listener in some situations—such as church, civic clubs, political rallies—and it should be one of the functions of the school to teach boys and girls to be good listeners, to make a good audience. Where better can this be done than in the assembly, where one learns to listen by listening?

There is the matter of applause, for instance. When does one applaud, and when is applause out of order? The

school has the opportunity and the responsibility to use every means at its command to teach such things as this. The assembly is one of the most convenient of these means.

In a community where even adults apparently do not realize the meaning of a curtain call, the assembly teaches young people the art of appreciation and how to express that appreciation. It coaxes the spectators into generous applause; at the same time it drills the performers in the gracious acceptance of these plaudits. And education progresses on both sides of the curtain.

Suppose the speaker is boring and lacks appeal for young people? The natural response is yawning, restlessness, whispering. As the situation arises, the school can instill in its youth the necessity of polite attention to an unpopular speaker.

9. Providing a Showcase for the Work of the Classroom

If each class were to put on a public show every week, as do the band and the football team, how great would be the incentive for class preparation! For obvious reasons this is not possible; but it is possible for certain learning experiences to culminate in a public program, and the assembly is the place to present it. It is the place where the English class presents the poems they have studied or written; where the history class debates issues of the day, and thus stimulates participants to extra spurts of study and research; where the science class displays the results of its investigations.

Also, the assembly program can encourage original writing in skits and scripts for public presentation, important in a school that has creative writing in its curriculum. This is the incentive *par excellence* for good writing.

10. Promoting Public Relations

If the assembly can present to the student body the work of the classroom, it can do so for the public as well. For

many years the elementary school has recognized the importance of inviting the public to assembly programs and using these occasions to interpret the work of their school. The secondary schools may well follow their example. Particularly if many of the programs are based on the work going on in the classroom, the school can "show off" to the public without putting on any special spectacle. The parent likes to see his child perform; he is interested in what the school is teaching; and he wants to see his child's teachers. Except for meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association, there is no better place than the assembly for him to do all of these things.

In some schools this avenue of public relations is closed because of lack of auditorium space. Yet some principals consider it so important that they schedule two assemblies to make it possible for more of the public to attend.

11. Making Announcements

Once one of the main purposes of the student assemblies, announcements are still of great importance. The intercom has taken precedence over the assembly for this purpose, and in many cases it is preferable. However, some announcements are most effectively made visually. For example, an informal skit about the United Fund campaign presents its cause far better than a mere introduction over the PA system.

Guiding Principles

It is particularly important for the student council adviser and those who work with him to realize that, in order to achieve these purposes, those responsible for assemblies must follow certain principles. The following are suggested as being basic for a strong program of assemblies.

1. Adequate faculty supervision is essential. Students are often immature and must be carefully guided in their work. Even the best student leaders will make errors in judgment (why else would we need schools?), some of which can be avoided if the maturity of the faculty is made available. The school assembly accomplishes its goals only if intelligent faculty members, striving for these ends, guide student leaders in their attainment.

Unless assemblies are integrated into established school policy, great mistakes can result. Yet boys and girls cannot know what the administration policy demands unless faculty members interpret it and make sure that programs conform to it.

If the faculty adviser must many times act as the brake, there are times when he must act as the accelerator or the steering wheel, by making suggestions and helping students to come up with ideas.

2. Programs must be run as has been suggested, ac-

cording to the principles which the administration has established as school policy. Here is a good opportunity to teach that, even though he may not agree with certain things, the student owes loyal support to the policies enunciated by properly authorized leaders.

3. General student participation should be encouraged. Students from all sectors of the school must be given an opportunity to participate both in the planning and in the execution of programs. The process helps draw out the timid person. True, the quality of the production may suffer, but in this case the success of the performance is not nearly so important as the success, years later, of the individuals who may have worked on it.

4. Inspiration, information, and entertainment must be presented in a balanced "diet." Here the work of the adviser is most important, for it is often difficult to make pupils understand that entertainment is not the most important element in planning a program. As a matter of fact, this has become an issue in student elections; it has happened that a student who has served as assembly chairman has lost an election for the presidency because "his" programs did not please the students. It is the adviser who must help the chairman and student body to see things in proper perspective and who must be sure that programs fulfill the purposes of the assembly in the school. He will realize, as students may not, that entertainment is only *one* of these purposes, and that it is not the most important.

5. If the student council is made responsible for school assemblies, it must realize the importance of delegating the responsibility for programs. It could not itself, even if it were desirable to do so, arrange all the programs of the year. The various clubs, classes, and activity groups of the school must have the opportunity and the responsibility of carrying out individual programs, always under the direction of the council and along the lines it specifies.

In an election year, the American history class could plan a mock party convention, to illustrate this phase of the electoral process.

If the school attitude toward scholarship has reached a low ebb, a recognition program, conducted with dignity and smoothness, might help. The school's chapter of the National Honor Society would be the natural organization to approach in this instance.

6. It is important to utilize school and community resources—human and material. Those who have traveled, those who have interesting hobbies, those who are specialists in some particular field all have a contribution to make. It is too often true that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," and the school fails to capitalize on opportunities within its grasp.

7. There must be long-range planning. It is wise to plan specific programs for the full school year, with a general outline extending even further. Some themes should be presented at least once during the school experience of each pupil, and only such planning insures that this is being accomplished. This type of planning also not only increases the chances of careful organization and makes certain that real thinking goes into the preliminary work, but is a bulwark against hastily-put-together programs used to fill in time on a day when no activity was planned.

Yet the outline must be flexible enough that changes can be made without unduly upsetting the schedule. If the opportunity for a really outstanding speaker presents itself in mid-year, the chairman should be able to adjust his schedule accordingly. In planning programs, wisdom dictates the inclusion of some which require little preparation and which can be shifted from one time to another without seriously disrupting plans of the group responsible for it. Thus, if a program must be canceled (and it is one of the headaches of the adviser and the chairman that such things

happen), the chairman can move some other program in to take care of the situation.

Programs planned with these purposes and these principles in mind will almost surely succeed; those planned without regard for these things are in grave danger of failing. It is the adviser who must keep all these imperatives in mind and try to guide his students in following them.

The Student Assembly

The Assembly Committee

As it does for all school activities, the administration bears the ultimate responsibility for school assemblies. The principal usually delegates this responsibility, sometimes asking faculty members to direct the activities. However, more and more administrators now realize that students often perform these duties exceptionally well. The student council is the logical group to head the programs, and many schools are turning to this body for leadership in planning and executing their assemblies. Here is one approach for the student council when it has been asked to assume control of this activity.

Name an assembly committee before school is out in the spring so that it can function through the summer as well as the following school year. The make-up of the committee will vary, of course, from school to school. Its chairman may be the vice-president of the student body, or a student especially elected to the post or appointed by the president.

Since the programs of the year will be the chairman's responsibility, he will establish a committee to cover all phases of the job. The group may include the devotions chairman, who will be in charge of devotional exercises (if these are a part of the school's assembly period); a staging chairman, who will set up the stage for each assembly according to the specifications of the group in

charge; a music chairman, who will provide music as students enter the auditorium and help to arrange the music for the programs; a flower chairman, who arranges flowers and stage decorations; and a secretary, who keeps necessary records.

PLANNING FOR THE YEAR

At some time before school starts, if possible, the committee should meet to arrange the year's programs. Either the student council faculty adviser or a faculty member appointed as adviser should be present for this, and for that matter, *any* meeting of the committee, as it is very important that faculty supervision be provided at every step in the committee's planning. The committee should keep certain reference materials readily available. Besides keeping on hand an annotated calendar of programs for the previous year (with at least an outline of these for several years before), the chairman should have three blank calendars to be filled in—one for himself, one for the faculty adviser, and one for the office—for reference all during the year. The magazine, *School Activities*, contains many suggestions for assemblies and often old copies of *Student Life* will yield the same, as sometimes will the report of the state student council workshop. Publishers' catalogs of plays should be at hand, and files of skits and stunts are often useful. The Future Homemakers' Association publishes a number of excellent mimeographed skits covering many activities, from devotionals to sportsmanship. And it is essential that the committee have a copy of the school calendar of activities with the year's schedule.

At the pre-school meeting, the committee tentatively schedules the year's assemblies. Everyone concerned should realize that these plans are not final, for many schools complain that groups are arbitrarily handed a date for a certain program, with resultant student resentment at such high-

handed procedure; in addition, programs thus scheduled often do not equal their possibilities. Suggestions and discussion should precede assignment of programs for specific dates. And even these are, of course, subject to change after consultation with those responsible for the programs. Shifts may be necessary, but only with a definite schedule can the chairman be assured of having well prepared material. The open dates idea has been tried, but has proved ineffective as it seldom happens that the unexpected opportunity comes at the time that has been left open, and the chairman finds himself one week with no program, another week with two.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

While planning, the committee considers questions like these: What standing programs do we have? Are they still important to student life? How were they handled last year? Should any changes be made? Are there any areas of school life that should be particularly emphasized this year? Could an assembly help? How do other schools do it? Would the program under consideration be uplifting to the student body? Is it in keeping with school policy? How much would it cost? What time of year should it be held? What group could do it best? Are there any programs we might add to our offerings?

Out of such discussions grows an organized, logical schedule which at least includes the potential for achieving the purposes for which the school designs its assembly program.

For the next step the chairman, the secretary, or a delegated individual gets in touch with each club, class, or individual responsible for a program. He explains the type of program desired, gives the suggested date, and secures the consent of the group involved. He might find that sometimes the date assigned must be changed or else that, for valid reasons, groups are unable to fulfill assigned tasks.

The tentative calendar must then be changed and adjustments noted.

In some cases—if outside speakers are to be invited, for instance—the chairman generally conducts the necessary business by mail. Remembering that correspondence requires time, he must get his letters off early enough to use replies in composing the final draft of his calendar.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

When assignments have been accepted and the three calendars filled in with final listings, the first part of the committee's work is complete. The second phase now begins. About two weeks before each program, the chairman, who will want to keep his finger on things all during the year, checks with the teachers or the students in charge, reminding them of their assignments and offering the help of his committee if this is needed. He will find that in some cases the reminder is necessary and that in others the offer of help is genuinely appreciated.

Even with the best of planning, some things will go wrong: a speaker will develop laryngitis or a play will run into rehearsal difficulties. Perhaps a well-known speaker on atomic science will be in the area and unexpectedly available as a lecturer during the week that the dramatics club play has been scheduled. The chairman cannot ask the club to forego the play, for which all have practiced so faithfully, yet the speaker is famous and offers an unusual opportunity for the student body. Would the school allow two programs for that week? Can the schedule be arranged so that an assembly can be omitted another week? It is the chairman's problem, but he must work with his adviser and with the principal in solving it.

Unless the responsibility has been delegated to someone else, it is incumbent on the assembly chairman to check on temperature, ventilation, and lighting in the auditorium.

(This does not refer to special stage lighting, which will be the task of the arrangements chairman or of a special lighting manager.) Occasionally, the principal looks after such matters, and sometimes he asks faculty members to do so; but the chairman should always check.

ACTING AS HOST

Insuring that guest speakers or entertainers are greeted on arrival, taken care of during their stay, and thanked by note soon after they have appeared comprises the fourth duty of the assembly committee.

EVALUATION

A fifth duty is to evaluate the program. After each performance, the chairman should write a criticism of the program based on both his own judgment and the formal and informal comments of others. He may either record such comments in a notebook or make brief notations on his calendar, to be passed on to the succeeding committee chairman. The advantage of the latter method is that next year's committee can see at a glance how this year's work has gone.

Simple comments are usually enough. For instance, when "Group singing—ineffective, insufficient preparation —audience not responsive" appears, the new chairman realizes that, if he includes a group sing, he must make doubly sure that plans are carefully made and that every precaution is taken to insure enthusiastic leadership.

Sometimes checklists are filled in and a report is compiled for each program. One objection: this is time-consuming and thus often not done at all. Usually the quick judgment will include the significant criticisms.

Both at the midpoint and at the end of the year, the committee will want to discuss the program as a whole. The chairman's task is, with the adviser, to frame questions

that will elicit honest criticisms and keep the meeting from becoming either a "pat-on-the-back" session or a "kick-in-the-pants" exchange of gripes. Questions such as these should be considered: Did we balance the over-all program? Did we give all the students an opportunity to feel a part of things? Which was the best program we had? What things may we have neglected that might be strengthened another term?

From the answers, the chairman will prepare a sheet of recommendations to be passed on to the incoming chairman, and his year's work will be completed.

Types of Programs

So many types of programs are available that there should be little difficulty in varying the offerings for students and making the programs interesting, instructive, and culturally uplifting. What are some of these types, and what are the advantages and difficulties of each? Here are some considerations.

THE PROFESSIONAL LECTURER

The professional lecturer offers an opportunity to hear and observe the best of public speaking. Even students who "hate a speech" recognize the magic of words as they are handled by an artist. Moreover, this is the easiest type of program to plan and present—no rehearsals, no research, no setting up stage.

However, lecturers' fees tend to be high, and many assembly committees simply cannot afford to spend the money demanded. Even when they have the funds, they must not yield to the easy way out too often. Perhaps the school will make a special effort to bring in an outstanding speaker at least once during each school year. Sometimes a speaker will lower his fee for a school, and this might make it possible for schools to enjoy quality performances.

Many industries keep professional lecturers on the payroll particularly for the educational phases of their pro-

gram. The government sends lecturers on atomic developments and the space program. These experts have been trained to hold the interest of students while imparting valuable information. They work on a tight schedule and should be engaged long ahead of time. The principal often gets advance information on the availability of such speakers; it would be well to ask him to make the necessary arrangements when he sees an opportunity. The programs may then be written into the calendar from the very beginning.

Preparations for this type of program are relatively simple if the chairman keeps certain things in mind: the speaker must be clearly informed of place and time; someone must greet him upon his arrival; someone has to introduce him; and the stage must be readied with chairs, microphone, and lectern. If slides are used, the school must provide a projection machine. Courtesy requires a note to him after the program expressing appreciation for the talk.

SPEAKERS FROM SCHOOL OR TOWN

Speakers from the school itself, from both the student body and the faculty, are often very effective. A student or a teacher with an interesting hobby might be persuaded to share it with the rest of the school, or the summer traveler might be willing to talk about countries he has visited—perhaps with pictures or slides.

The foreign exchange student is almost always welcome. The students hang on every word as the little Swiss girl tells about the differences between her country's schools and ours; and they are eager to know about her people and their customs. The school assembly is a made-to-order medium for building understanding between countries.

Equally valuable is the report of the American student who has either traveled overseas or in some other way come to know the people of another land.

Reports of other student experiences may be valuable to the student body. The boy or girl who has attended a national convention should have new ideas, and sometimes a report in the assembly is the best way to get them across to others. But the adviser should check carefully that the speech is presenting important ideas and *not* routine, dry-as-dust facts.

Often a school goes far away to seek speakers, when all the time it has experts on its own faculty. Home faculty potential should not be neglected. At one school a teacher who was in great demand as an after-dinner speaker, receiving handsome fees for each appearance, was ignored by his own school.

The community might be a rich source of speaking talent. Consider the clergy, for instance. The minister who has visited the Holy Land or who has exchanged pulpits with his equivalent in a foreign country can present an excellent program without touching on subjects that would prove offensive to those in his audience. (Caution is essential here; the student body will undoubtedly represent many religious backgrounds.)

Local industries (particularly those that might be hiring these same students in a few months), civic clubs (contact the chairman of student affairs), politicians (glad to meet the future voters), and many other individuals and community organizations may be able to furnish speakers.

There is one thing to watch carefully: The speakers must be carefully screened so that the students are not exploited by those with a personal axe to grind. The adviser must insure that the speaker understands his assignment and is sincerely trying to help the school.

DRAMATIC PROGRAMS

Certainly one of the most important types of assembly will be the dramatic program. This ranges from the most

elaborate play, carefully planned and coached, to the simplest skit. It might be the work of a dramatics class (if the school is fortunate enough to have one), a dramatics club, a regular academic class, or any group responsible for putting an idea across to the student body.

No other type of program is so interesting for the audience, and there is no more vivid way to present material. A student may not long remember "The Devil and Daniel Webster" when the story is required of him as a classroom assignment, but he is not apt to forget quickly the presentation of Aaron Burr, Stephen Bonnet, and the other members of the other-world jury as they appear in the play.

Dramatic productions also make possible much more student participation than do many other types of programs. Almost every student in a class may be involved in acting, make-up, lighting, staging, or other phases of a dramatic presentation. In the case of skits, the writing provides still another opportunity for participation.

Dramatics helps students to overcome shyness and to develop stage presence.

There are drawbacks as well as advantages. For instance, many presentations may require more time for rehearsals than a group can afford. No group should begin production of a play without realizing what is involved in terms of time expenditure.

Finding a *place* for practice may be just as difficult as finding time. With many departments and activities competing for the use of the school auditorium, and with the difficulty involved in heating it outside of school hours, it is often hard to arrange extra rehearsals.

And then there is the problem of expense. Most good plays require the payment of a royalty; and this, added to the purchase price of cast copies, sometimes makes the script expensive for non-profit dramatics groups. Add the cost of stage settings and costumes and it becomes evident

that the total cost may make it necessary to limit the number of plays. Here again the principal and the adviser must weigh the cost against the advantages and decide what is desirable and what the budget will stand.

Both of these disadvantages are minimized in the informal skit, which may be made as elaborate or as simple as the director wishes. Most skits need only the cyclorama, with a few props to suggest settings, and they can get their idea across with the simplest of costumes.

Often the skit grows out of class work. But there are skits available from various publishers that often fit the class's purposes perfectly. However, it is important not to underestimate the ability and creativity of students, for they are capable of far more than that for which they are usually given credit.

One other type of dramatic entertainment should be mentioned—the professional acting troupes. It is perhaps best for students to see Shakespeare done by a trained group of actors; however, the cost for this may be prohibitive. Therefore, the school may have to depend on the offerings of neighboring colleges and attendance at professional presentations for this experience.

MUSICAL PROGRAMS

If any program is more popular than dramatics, it is the musical. Again this may be professional or amateur, performed either by visiting groups or by school organizations.

Colleges often send their glee clubs or bands on tour; if the school wants such a visit, it can usually schedule it with relative ease at least once a year. For the musical organizations within the school, an assembly concert can serve as a grand finale for the school year. The band, orchestra, and choral groups generally are more than happy to display the results of a year's work.

Audience-participation "sings" have proved entertaining,

but only when planned. Too often students think: "It's easy to get a bunch of people together and just sing. Everyone likes to sing." Almost everyone *does* like to sing, to be sure, but nothing can fall flatter than a songfest that has been haphazardly thrown together. A good leader is essential; make sure he (or she) is enthusiastic, vivacious, and knowledgeable about singing. The program must include a varied selection of songs—modern and old favorites, catchy tunes and sentimental ballads, novelty songs and serious music. Interest is heightened by several solo or small group numbers sprinkled among the songs sung by the audience; these should be planned well and be carefully rehearsed. The leader should know when to stop, with his audience wanting more.

For light entertainment, musical quiz shows modeled after the TV shows have added interest if varied so as to include some instrumental numbers and solos. One advantage of such a program is that it can be planned in a short time by a few people, and thus is valuable as a reserve for the time when the speaker of the day contracts influenza or some similar misfortune strikes.

PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL DAYS

A combination of these types of programs may be used for the observances of special days which are part of every school calendar. Christmas, Easter, patriotic holidays, and Thanksgiving are among those most often celebrated by assemblies.

Publishers produce an abundance of material, plays or musical programs, suitable for these occasions. It helps if the adviser keeps on hand a supply of programs appropriate for each occasion, making it unnecessary to order hurriedly and without an opportunity to examine material.

For the Christmas program, schools often combine the dramatic or musical phases with charity, the pageant cul-

minating in the bringing of gifts for the unfortunate of the community.

In much the same way, Easter programs are sometimes devoted to an inspirational pageant or play, followed by the presentation of lilies or other flowers to the community's sick or the shut-in.

AUDIOVISUALS

Filmstrips and slides are available on a number of different subjects. They may be used alone or as a supplement to other material. The opaque projector provides an effective instrument for background pictures. It is easy to assemble a program using magazine photographs with a narrative explaining them and songs or poems fitting into the framework.

Blackout curtains and a large screen visible from every part of the auditorium are essential to the use of these aids. Programs like these may be most enjoyable and instructive, but only if they move smoothly. Nothing is more annoying than to sit through a movie in which sound and picture are not synchronized, or to sit and wait while someone adjusts the knobs and reels.

A screen is desirable and should be purchased if this type of program is to be used often; however, it is possible to improvise a screen that is quite satisfactory for most purposes. Sheeting may be attached to two long wooden bars and suspended from the ceiling. The weight of the bar at the bottom will pull out the wrinkles and make the surface suitable for showing pictures.

RECOGNITION ASSEMBLIES

The assembly affords an opportunity for public recognition of outstanding achievement on the part of students. Honors and awards presented during school assemblies are often more meaningful to the recipients when the citation

is read before fellow-students and parents. Senior Standout Recognition Day, Athletic Awards Day, and Music Awards Day are representative of this type of assembly.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The ideal student participation assembly springs from class work and fits into the teaching plan. This type of program is proof that the assembly is one of the school's curriculum tools and not merely a frill.

For English classes, dramatizing ballads, short stories, and one-act plays is a pleasant (though by no means easy) method of teaching these literature forms. Poetry recitations (with or without staging and costuming) can make an interesting program. Debate is instructive. Other exercises include book reviews, skits about books, or panels discussing various authors or trends studied in the literature classes. Discussions concerning changes in word usage and pronunciation may also be educational.

Although the fashion show is probably the best known homemaking program, there are other contributions this class can make. Programs on etiquette, on good grooming, or on the proper use of color and line in clothing would be logically the responsibility of this class.

Language classes have many possibilities. Skits can be presented in the native language, with the English version following. Latin classes often present skits designed to show the atmosphere of ancient life or the contemporary importance of the classics.

Social studies students might debate some subject pertinent to current events. Crisis spots of the world may be explored by either discussion or lectures. Many historical skits are admirably suited for class study and production. Scenes from "Prologue to Glory," "Young Abe Lincoln," "Victoria Regina," and other plays of this type truly chal-

lenge the class. Psychology classes might deal with some phase of mental health for an assembly program.

Demonstrations of experiments or scientific principles, biographies of famous scientists, and stories of great scientific discoveries are among the possibilities for science class assemblies.

Mathematics classes might present a colorful geometric design in modern textiles. A demonstration of the way geometry or algebra actually solves problems may help some to understand the practicality of mathematics.

FEATURE PROGRAMS

To many students the feature assembly program is the frosting on the cake.

An example of this type of program is the ceremony at which the yearbook class beauties are chosen. The editor of the yearbook's feature section could possibly take charge of the competition, including the responsibility for choosing a theme, decorating the stage, securing judges, and arranging rehearsals.

The Alumni Day assembly, given as part of the homecoming observance, may feature alumni speaking in a special assembly, or members of the student body honoring the returning guests.

Campaign speeches during student council election are always interesting.

May Day is another occasion often celebrated by schools. The assembly many times is moved to an outdoor setting, in an arena or even on the football field, and the entire program, complete with the crowning of the queen and the entertainment of her court, is presented for school and public.

Another popular program is the panel or forum discussion, which is particularly valuable in influencing student opinion when a change of any kind is contemplated. When

the subject concerns the community as well as the school, townspeople and representatives of industry might supplement the usual student-teacher panel make-up.

Such a panel was held in a school beset by a parking problem. As this clearly involved more people than the school's population, police officers, parents, and businessmen were invited to participate in the assembly discussion. The police left with a much clearer understanding and appreciation of students' problems and, incidentally, with a strengthened interest in the students and desire to help them.

One school used the open forum to introduce the concept of the student council to the students, preparatory to the organization of such a council. A committee, composed of students and teachers who had studied the question of the student council movement during the preceding summer, discussed before the student body the ways they thought a council could be organized, the purposes it might serve, and the procedure that should be followed. After a brief presentation of these ideas, the floor was thrown open to the entire assembly for questions, which the panel attempted to answer.

PROGRAMS FROM BOOKING AGENCIES

The advantage of programs supplied by booking agencies is the ease with which arrangements are made and the programs presented. The disadvantage is that they require payment so that, unless the school assumes the cost, students must pay for the privilege of attending their own assembly.

The Student Assembly

A Sample Assembly Calendar

Here is the year's calendar of assemblies for Blankville High School, with notations for the chairman.

September 8—Howdy Week program—introducing freshmen in short variety numbers. Big Brothers and Big Sisters are to be in charge of discovering talent and planning the program. Jane Brown, Howdy Week chairman.

September 15—Illustrated talk—on Africa—featuring W. M. Pelham, personnel director Blankville Textile Company.

September 22—Panel discussion—topic "How can we at Blankville High School improve sportsmanship in our school?" Tommy Black is to supervise. Suggestions: Use on the panel representatives of various sports, the honor society, and the faculty. Consult the student council pamphlet on sportsmanship, as well as magazines in library and student council files.

September 29—Program of poetry—Sophomore English class, Miss Ella Keating, teacher. Suggestion: Use inspirational poetry.

(Note the attempt to vary programs: the freshman show will be musical in nature; the panel will try to influence student attitudes; the lecture will be informational; and the poetry will, hopefully, inspire. The lecture on Africa holds

particular interest because the Blankville Textile Company is establishing a plant in the part of Africa which Mr. Pelham visited last summer, and there is more than a possibility that some of the students now in school will be workers in the new plant.)

October 6—Junior-Senior debate—Miss Mary Brown, senior English teacher, and Mr. James Kay, teacher of world history. Suggestions: Ask teachers to let their classes choose a topic and write papers on it, choosing the best as a basis for the debate.

October 13—Beauty contest—for choosing class beauties for the yearbook—Anne Blake, feature editor for the Blankville Tiger. Suggestions: Remind Anne to get in touch with the chorus director and work out all plans with him so that the music will be what she wants. Remind her also to get in touch with judges well ahead of time and to plan special music to fill in the time while judges are conferring.

October 21—Homecoming-Alumni program—Bill White, state senator and alumnus, will be asked to speak—John Atkins, student president, in charge of program.

October 28—Senior Standout Day—Miss Lucy Granger, student council adviser, in charge of program.

(Note that again variety has been sought. It might be desirable to give Bill White a subject on which to speak. The Senior Standout program, a tradition in the school, needs few suggestions.)

November 4—Book Week program—Jeanne Cartwright, chairman of library council, and Miss Sue Curtiss, librarian. Suggestion: possibly a series of skits showing scenes from books, leaving off just at the most interesting point with the question, "What do you think happened next?"

November 11—American Education Week program—student council—Jane Chalmers, chairman of American

Education Week committee. Suggestion: "The Mighty Mysterious Tree," skit from an old American Education Week packet. Also, ask representatives of American Legion and PTA to speak briefly.

November 18—Lecture—NASA representative. (Note that Mr. Jensen, the principal, made all arrangements during a summertime principals' conference at which the speaker's services were offered.)

December 1—Group sing—Linda Smith. Suggestion: Be sure to plan carefully. Several good songs for this sort of program were sung at the summer workshop for student council officers. Consult the report to find these. Also check with Mr. Brown, chorus director, for suggestions and help.

December 8—Report on America in Viet Nam—Mr. Jerry Cain, teacher of social studies. Suggestion: Ask Mr. Cain to try to explain what the situation is and what our country is doing in Viet Nam. Offer to get a map for him if he wants it.

December 15—White Christmas program—Miss Mary Starr, director of dramatics club, and Mr. Gary Brown, chorus director. Suggestion: "The Other Wise Man" with music; chairman of gi[illegible] responsible for presentation; one person responsible for Christmas tree.

(Note that the suggestions seek to let the chairman profit by last year's mistakes. Note the offer to provide necessary maps or props. If the White Christmas program is traditionally a student council project, that organization may remain in charge. However, to the degree possible, it is desirable that other organizations be permitted to do as much as they are willing to do.)

January 13—Lecture—William Bailey, personnel director for the Green Manufacturing Company. Suggestion: Ask school guidance counselor to talk to Mr. Bailey ahead of time and inform him that the student council would like

to have the talk slanted toward those students who will not go to college. Ask him to answer questions like these: If a person cannot go to college, how can he become an educated person? Where can he get technical training? What is the cost of such training? What are the requirements for entrance into trade and technical schools? What does industry expect of workers?

January 27—Shakespearean troup—presentation: "The Taming of the Shrew." John Singleton to assist in setting up stage.

(Note that the January programs are all non-student-participation programs. With semester examinations during this month, students should not have to spend a great deal of time in preparing assembly programs. Mr. Bailey was chosen by the assembly committee as the speaker for January 13 because the guidance counselor and the principal had heard him at a state meeting and recommended him. The student council felt that college preparation had been emphasized to such an extent that many who could not go to college felt left out completely. This program was an attempt to balance the other program.)

February 3—Future Teachers' Club—Margaret Ward, president, Miss Susan Haskins, adviser. Suggestion: an original skit picturing requirements and rewards of teachers from 1890 to the present time.

February 10—Alcohol education program (as required by state law)—film: Mr. Albert Walls, director of audio-visuals.

February 14—Teacher Appreciation Day—James Howard, chairman, appointed by president of student council.

February 24—Band concert—Mr. James Carr, band director.

(Note that during this month, by special arrangement with the principal, the assembly period is changed from

February 17 to February 14. The student council asked for a special assembly to honor teachers and particularly requested Valentine Day. During the program students will present to teachers valentines with original verses for each teacher, heartshaped boxes of candy, and carnation corsages or boutonnieres. To keep the plans secret, officers posted on the calendar a regular assembly notice "February 17—Lecture. Mr. James Smith.)

March 3—Dramatics Club—Miss Mary Starr, director. Suggestion: Considering that last year's play was a comedy, as was the recent "The Taming of the Shrew," perhaps this should be a serious play.

March 17—Program of Irish songs, dances, and stories—Ann Hansen, chairman. Suggestion: As this will involve several departments, Nell will be asked to coordinate efforts. The chorus director will help with the songs, the P. E. teacher with dances, and we suggest that Miss Mary Brown, senior English teacher, might be prevailed upon to recite one of the two Ellis Parker Butler stories, "Pigs Is Pigs" and "Just Like a Cat," which she does so well.

March 31—Concert by school chorus—Mr. Brown.

April 7—Teacher talent program—Mrs. Sue Baker. Suggestion: Try to get every teacher to participate, even if only in a choral number.

April 14—Campaign speeches for student elections—Dan Segal, election chairman, in charge. Suggestion: Limit speakers so that program will not run overtime.

April 17—Easter program—Aline Davis. Suggestion: As the school will be asked to repeat this for a community sunrise service, choose something suitable for outdoor presentation.

April 21—Program on etiquette—Beth Searles, F. H. A. chairman. Suggestion: With Junior-Senior prom coming up, the rules of etiquette must be stressed. Perhaps an

audience-participation show, with a pantomimed story, would be effective.

April 28—Fashion show—Mary Barnes, homemaking teacher. (Note that because campaign speeches must come during the week of April 17, the council has again petitioned the principal for an extra assembly period. In the event that there should be too heavy an assembly schedule, some other program would have to be canceled.)

May 1—May Day—Miss Eleanor Betts, physical education teacher.

May 12—Student council installation—John Atkins, student president, in charge. Suggestion: How about the laboratory idea brought back from the state convention?

May 19—Examinations—no assembly.

May 26—Senior Chapel-Class Day exercises—Grace Aiken, president.

The committee would hope that the following things would be outcomes of the year's assemblies:

1. Increased knowledge of Viet Nam, Africa, state government, highway safety, proper rules of etiquette, America's space program.
2. Student attitudes influenced in such areas as sportsmanship, technical training, alcohol, teachers.
3. Honoring of teachers and deserving students.
4. Greater audience appreciation of good music, good literature, good speakers.
5. An increased patriotism, not only from programs like "The Mighty Mysterious Tree," but also from the presentation of the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Certain things have been omitted from the plans for this year's programs and must surely be included the next year. A place on the schedule must be found for the science and the mathematics departments; perhaps the honor society should make its installation public; the junior-senior debate might be replaced by some activity in which the freshmen and the sophomores would compete against each other; a program presenting some famous masterpieces of painting

or sculpture is in order; the school can ask returning college students to appear in a program.

As the year goes by, the chairman will find that his carefully worked out calendar, will, for various reasons, undergo changes. Some will cause no difficulty for him; others will bring on headaches. He must always remember that the schedule must be flexible enough to allow for these changes.

Changes should not be made without consultation with the chairman. A social studies teacher asked to speak on one of the crisis spots of the world once appeared on stage with the football coach and several athletes and announced: "The biggest world crisis I know is the forthcoming game with Technical High School. Therefore, we will discuss that crisis." A pep rally followed, which may have been desirable but which was far from the planning of the committee. As events arise, it is the duty of the chairman to decide what can be cancelled and how the change can be made. Whatever the problem may be, he must have the year's plan in hand, and be able to make any changes at any time.

The Student Assembly

Two Programs From Planning To Presentation

Let us trace two assembly programs from the moment of their inception to their actual performance. The things that need to be done will be presented in order. Dates are approximate, intended only to give some idea of the length of time between activities. Later the process for a program which must be presented in a short time, without much preparation, will be shown.

September 1—Carole Jennings, assembly chairman, asks the adviser and the president of the student council to plan an October 18 program that will be entertaining and instructive. It should have some music, chosen so as to help the council toward its goal of increasing student appreciation of music; yet, she cautions, it must not be "long-hair," for the student body is not ready for that. Miss Richards, the adviser, and John, the council president, will be responsible.

September 3—At the regular student council meeting, John tells the group about the assignment and asks Charlotte Adams to serve as chairman.

September 5—Miss Richards, John, Charlotte, and Mrs. Warner, of the music department, meet to outline a program. As they talk about various possibilities, someone comes up with the idea that the music and life story of a popular composer might be presented in the form of a skit.

Among the composers suggested is Irving Berlin. The consensus is that his life and music ought to appeal to the students. Charlotte and Miss Richards agree to write a script.

September 10—Charlotte and Miss Richards, having carefully read the book, "Irving Berlin," by David Ewing, have an outline of a skit. Mrs. Warner and John help choose music and songs, and these are worked into the story.

September 15—The committee meets and works out a list of characters, stage managers, lighting managers, property managers, pianists, prompters, musical groups, and individuals to perform. Mrs. Warner orders the music. Charlotte secures the consent of all who have been asked to perform. If the school requires parents' permission blanks for practices, she distributes these blanks.

September 20—Charlotte, after a consultation with Miss Richards and Mrs. Warner, checks with the auditorium calendar to arrange practice times. After a brief discussion about suggested practice hours with the cast, she posts a practice schedule, which reads something like this:

Skit rehearsals—October 10, 11, 12, 13—7:00 p.m., auditorium

Girls' Sextet—"Give Me Your Poor, Your Tired" October 5, 6, 7 (further rehearsals to be decided by group) Chorus room

Mixed Chorus—"God Bless America," "Count Your Blessings," "Easter Parade," "White Christmas," regular chorus period

Full Band—"Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Annie, Get Your Gun," regular band period

Solo numbers: work out individual practices with pianists. "How I Hate to Get Up," "Always," "The Girl That I Marry"

Dress rehearsal—October 16—7:00 p.m.

September 21—Charlotte and Miss Richards meet with the staging chairman to outline background they would

like to have. They ask for the New York skyline cut out of cardboard with small windows cut out and covered with colored cellophane. They also request a 10-foot Statue of Liberty cut out of cardboard with lines drawn in heavy black. (At this time the lighting chairman may be present for special instruction as to the silhouetting of the skyline scene and the color lighting of the Statue of Liberty.)

October 1—Assembly chairman checks to be sure program is under way. She reports to student council adviser.

October 16—Dress rehearsal. Miss Richards makes notes of changes which can be made.

October 18—Charlotte and the adviser check to be sure all members of cast and musical groups are present. They also check the lighting board, the prompters' place, and the stage managers. At 8:30 the lights in the audience are dimmed as the stage lights gradually silhouette the skyline and pick out the Statue of Liberty while Irving Berlin, the immigrant, looks on with his family and the sextet sings "Give Me Your Poor."

If each assembly of the year demanded as much time as the Berlin show, it would be impossible for a school to produce a full schedule. Fortunately, many programs worth a great deal to the student body may be presented with little practice time. The following describes such a program.

Preparations for the program of Irish songs, dances, and stories can be elaborate, or greatly simplified. The procedure might look like this:

September 1—Assembly chairman asks Ann Hansen to be in charge of a program for Saint Patrick's Day. Ann agrees to coordinate the parts of the program. She and Miss Richards, student council adviser, go to Miss Jensen, of the physical education department, and Mr. Bryan, of

the chorus, who agree to keep the assembly in mind as they plan their classes during the year.

March 2—Ann learns the P. E. class will be happy to demonstrate two of the several Irish dances they learned during the year. White skirts and blouses already owned by the classes can be decorated with shamrock cutouts with little green beanies completing a colorful and inexpensive costume. Miss Jensen agrees to spend two class periods in reviewing the dances.

On the same day, Ann goes to Mr. Bryan and asks about Irish songs for the chorus repertoire. There is only one, but it is a lovely number which Mr. Bryan will rehearse in the two meetings of chorus before program time. Also, he suggests that one of the girls might sing a solo; and offers to sing one himself. Ann thanks him and immediately sees the girl suggested for a solo. She agrees.

March 3—Ann talks to Miss Brown, asking her to recite the Irish story, "Pigs Is Pigs." Miss Brown consents. Ann then reports to the student council adviser that the program is set. When the assembly chairman checks to be sure that everything is moving smoothly, Ann is able to tell her that plans are complete.

March 12—Ann checks with physical education class and chorus and with Miss Brown to find whether there are any props anyone would like to have. No one asks for anything, but it occurs to her that the singer, wearing a white party dress, would look even better framed in a green shamrock. She asks Mary Greene, who is very artistic, to help her. They make a large wire frame in the shape of a shamrock, fasten to it a double frill of green net, and cover a background panel with silver foil. This will add color to the program.

March 16—Ann and Miss Richards check with light and

stage managers to determine that the stage is set as it should be for the program.

March 17—Ann and Miss Richards conduct a last-minute perusal of record players to be sure the music is right. At 8:30 the curtain goes up and the Irish come on.

In each case, immediately following the program those concerned gave some sort of evaluation. These points might be illuminated: The audience response was good. Students liked this type of program. The movements of the chorus were awkward (perhaps this could be eliminated by a little careful planning). The music was good.

The work of the student chairman has been emphasized throughout this account. It may seem unduly optimistic to feel that a student would assume so much responsibility, but as the aim of the student council is to train for leadership, it is important that students be given as many leadership opportunities as possible. The adviser must be ready to step in if the students start to falter, but generally she should adopt the more difficult policy of letting the student work relatively independently.

Work must be delegated. No one person or group can do everything necessary to make a year's assembly programs successful. Yet the student council adviser must keep in constant touch with all preparations. A program cannot be assigned and then forgotten.

Suggestions For Specific Programs

Almost everyone eventually reaches a point where he cannot think of a fresh idea. Here are some possibilities. There is nothing new about them. Even if they are not implemented exactly as described, perhaps they will at least provide food for thought. Each has been used in a school assembly program, with at least a fair degree of success.

1. The format of "The Life of Irving Berlin" can be adapted to present the life of another musician. George Gershwin and George M. Cohan are good subjects, and John Philip Sousa offers a wonderful opportunity for a good band.

2. "America in Story and Song," a pageant, is colorful and interesting; and only the ingenuity of the adviser limits the variety of ways this theme can be presented. "Sail On," "The First American," "Old Hundred," "The Minute Man," "Westward Ho!," "Brother Against Brother," "Safe for Democracy," "The Flag on Iwo Jima" are episodes that have been used.

3. "The Story of the Flag," if produced properly, holds great fascination. In this show, flags of our country are displayed, accompanied by pertinent songs and poems. A short discussion of flag etiquette is appropriate. Something like this program should be given often enough to insure

that every student will see it at some time during his school experience.

4. The Future Teachers' Club might present a skit showing the changes in teaching from 1890 to the present time —and even projected into the future. The first scene pictures the hiring of an 1890's girl, with the selectmen instructing her about making the fires, sweeping the floors, and knocking some "l'arnin' " into the "young'uns" heads. The strict personal requirements may be emphasized. The 1932 teacher is portrayed as being so thrilled over finally landing a job after four years of expensive training and several months of job hunting that she does not even question the ban on dancing, smoking, week-night dating, or cards. Sixty dollars a month seems like a fortune, and she is glad to do the custodian's work. The third scene shows an experienced teacher of 1964 meeting with the Future Teachers' Club and discussing standards, salaries, and problems of the present-day teacher. Then a peek into the 1980's shows the greater use of teacher aides, the higher salary, and the greater prestige earned by the teacher, whose profession has at last given her a chance for advancement.

5. At the beginning of the football season many students would appreciate an explanation of the game. The coach and some of his players might come up to the auditorium and describe the game for the benefit of those who don't know a pass from a punt. Also, an explanation of changes that have taken place in rules might help curtail some of the fans' criticism of referees. Remember, such programs might increase attendance at the games.

6. To show the progress American education has made, develop a skit contrasting the old and the new. On one side of the stage picture the Little Red Schoolhouse, with water bucket, pot-bellied stove, and slates (taking care not to portray them in a derogatory manner); on the other side, modern equipment, including a TV set, attractive surroundings, and maps and charts.

7. A pre-Christmas program in which home economics girls demonstrate unusual decorations or gift wrappings is enjoyable and gives practical information.

8. A Book Week program may have costumed figures step from the pages of a large plywood "book," tell enough of their story to arouse interest, and then challenge the audience to guess the title of the work. *Joan of Arc, A Man for the Ages, Huckleberry Finn, Great Expectations, Jane Eyre, Oliver Twist, Captains Courageous, The Odyssey, Twenty Years at Hull House,* and *The Spy* are a few of the titles suitable.

9. An impressive, yet simple, program explains the symbolism of the school seal. An art student might prepare a large gold seal to hang over the center of the stage. Speakers present the meaning of whatever symbols appear in the seal.

10. Slides of the Presidents' wives (obtainable from the Smithsonian Institute), with descriptive material, make an educational program and provide a history or English class with an excellent opportunity for historical research.

11. "The Handicapped Have Served the World" can be the theme to emphasize the responsibility of a community to give opportunities to the handicapped. A little research, with the help of the state employment office, will reveal many great men and women who, though handicapped, have made valuable contributions to the world. A selection from Beethoven may be part of the program, as a reader reminds the audience what a prominent role in the shaping of our musical heritage was played by this man who was deaf. An excerpt from Helen Keller's writing, or a quotation from one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's speeches may be pertinent.

12. Either an opaque or a slide projector may be used to make more vivid an art appreciation lecture. The program can be prepared by students or speakers may be in-

vited to lecture. (Art professors from neighboring colleges will often come to the school and talk.)

13. Science Fair winners presenting their projects and explaining what they did and how they worked out their problems makes a worthwhile assembly.

14. A hobby program can be interesting, and is often followed by an exhibition of hobbies somewhere in the building. The assembly chairman chooses four or five people whose hobbies are both varied and capable of projecting well from a platform. There are at least two approaches: one, have the subjects talk about their hobbies or, two, let the program take the form of an interview, in which the chairman asks questions designed to bring out the most interesting aspects of the hobbies.

15. When subject teaching methods change drastically, as recently in mathematics and languages, a demonstration lesson is well worth the effort, both as an assembly and at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting.

16. The guidance director, with help from either teachers or students, may lecture on the possibilities present in different careers, with colorful graphs and flip sheets to enliven the proceedings. Salary, opportunity for advancement, personality requisites, educational requirements, and extra benefits for various jobs are discussion possibilities for such a program.

17. Either as a part of a fashion show or as a separate program, homemaking classes might demonstrate the principles that govern choice of fabrics, colors, and lines for clothes, not only for girls but also for boys. They should illustrate the fact that stripes add height, dark colors are slimming, contrast cuts height, etc. Oddly enough, boys will find as much interest in this program as will the girls.

18. Give students who have attended national meetings, summer workshops, or special tours an opportunity to share their experiences with others in the school. Sometimes the

student council is the proper place for this report. However, a particularly stimulating report might have enough general interest to warrant its being delivered before the entire student body.

19. In an election year programs designed to inform future voters are in order. There is, of course, the popular lecture by a history teacher or a political speaker. Another possibility is the mock campaign, with the school divided into political parties, complete with nomination of candidates, writing of platforms, and finally, the election of "congressmen" and "president."

20. In many schools, fund raising for charity is cut to a minimum, the school supporting only one drive, usually the United Fund type. Students should be introduced to the objectives of the many causes for a serious study of how and to whom the dollar given to charity is distributed. The assembly, by presenting speakers who interpret the needs of the charities, can certainly help in this educational campaign.

21. The history class is the likely candidate to present a program consisting of excerpts from some of the great speeches of the past. Arrange sketches of the Roman Forum, the Lincoln Memorial, the Arc de Triomphe, and Big Ben in background as readers recite segments of speeches dating from Spartacus to Churchill.

22. English classes often dramatize stories they have studied. Some of them are found among the scripts of publishers; others are adapted by the class itself. "A Retrieved Reformation" is an example of a story that can be treated in this way. Others will suggest themselves as the class studies them. "The Revolt of Mother" has been published as a one-act play, as has "Tom Sawyer Whitewashes the Fence."

23. "Love Poems of the Ages" was the subject on one Valentine assembly program. A Scottish lad gave "My

Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose." A country boy and his sweetheart pantomimed "The Courtin' " as a reader gave the poem, and Robert and Elizabeth Browning stepped forward for "How Do I Love Thee?" Finally a white-haired couple did "John Anderson, My Jo."

Points to Remember

The adviser who has assumed for himself and his student council the responsibility for a year's assembly programs has indeed undertaken a major task—one that will demand all the ingenuity he can master, plus the qualities of self-discipline and dedication, among others. He has let himself in for the work of playwright, director, programming chief, stage hand, and drill master; he will know the frustrations of failure, the worry of "first-night jitters," and the bone-weariness of many extra hours' work; and he will often feel the sting of lack of appreciation.

Let him never feel too sorry for himself, however, for if the problems are great, so too are the rewards, both professional and personal. To the teacher who has dedicated his life to his students, the inspiration, entertainment, and education which are a product of assemblies will compensate for many problems. As he watches boys and girls develop leadership and poise, knowing that he has had a part in the process, he truly finds his reward.

Moreover, there is the personal satisfaction of finding in this work the fulfillment of a need for creative expression. Whatever talents an adviser may possess, he will use them all in directing assemblies; for here the teacher finds scope for his artistic ability, his knowledge of music, his flair for the use of color.

For the students concerned, the rewards are equally great.

What most adults would not have given for the opportunity to participate in such activities when they were growing up!

This booklet has grown out of years of experience in the fascinating work of school assemblies. It is intended to facilitate the work of advisers and program managers. It should be emphasized that the suggestions made throughout are just that; they are *guidelines* that advisers may find helpful, but certainly not ironclad rules of procedure. There are many ways the job may be done. Suggestions must be tailored to fit the individual tastes and needs of any group planning to use them.

It is to be hoped that students, teachers, and administrators who read this booklet will keep this in mind and will discover in these suggestions a springboard for their own ideas and ingenuity, a point of departure for new and exciting adventures in the world of the auditorium.

About the Author

Letitia Frank, who is the student council adviser and an instructor of English and French at Ware Shoals Public School, Ware Shoals, South Carolina, is a native and lifelong resident of that state.

Miss Frank received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Winthrop College, Rock Hill, S. C., with a major in languages and a minor in secondary education. She continued her studies at Duke University, Durham, N. C., which awarded her a Master of Arts degree in French. She has done further graduate work at the Universities of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Paris.

Her teaching career has been entirely in the secondary schools of her home state. Soon after the student council movement became popular in South Carolina, she was appointed an adviser, and has remained extremely active in the council movement. She has served as president of the state advisers' group and has worked on advisory committees. When the state summer workshop was organized, she was a member of its staff, and has contributed her services almost every summer since.

Miss Frank has been an active member of the National and South Carolina Education Associations, the National and South Carolina Councils of Teachers of English, the Modern Language Association, and the Classical Association. She has also been an officer at the chapter and local levels of the Delta Kappa Gamma national sorority for teachers.